

Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

| EARLY STAGE | MIDDLE STAGE | LATE STAGE |
|--|--|---|
| <p>The “early stage” of Alzheimer’s disease typically lasts from almost no time at all to about 5 years. People in this stage generally show the following characteristics and /or symptoms:</p> <p><u>Problems remembering most recent information – short term memory loss</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to recall what was learned a few minutes, hours or days ago • No sense of recognition, as if the information was never given in the first place • Long term memory remains intact—memories from years past are the clearest • Repeats stories, statements, and requests <p><u>Difficulty performing familiar tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not turning on the oven or forgetting ingredients in an old familiar recipe • Changes in follow-through or ability to pay bills, balance checkbook • Changes in ability to follow through with usual grocery shopping routines <p><u>Altered or decreased judgment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in ability to set usual limits on purchases—buying everything offered for sale on TV, or writing checks to any salesperson who comes to the door, solicits over the phone or through the mail • Putting items in unusual places—firewood in clothes dryer, portable phone in refrigerator • Dressing inappropriately for the weather | <p>The “middle stage” of Alzheimer’s disease can last anywhere from 2-12 years. Symptoms described in the early stage become more obvious and evident. People in this stage generally show the following characteristics and/or symptoms:</p> <p><u>Continues to remember less and less. Person forgets more quickly than in early stages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can’t remember visits right after you leave • Eventually forgets own name, names of spouse, children and others • Increased repetition of statements, requests, actions <p><u>Increased difficulty or inability to perform familiar tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May only be able to perform one step of a task at a time when instructed • Needs help with everyday things such as bathing and dressing • Has decreased attention span <p><u>Lack of or poor judgment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to judge safe conditions • May act in unsafe ways—no coat in winter, leave stove on • May act in inappropriate ways—undress in public, act out sexually <p><u>Language changes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to find the right word or remember names of simple objects • May be unable to understand what is being said • Is able to communicate non-verbally—body language, emotions • May be able to react to non-verbal communication of others but may misinterpret <p><u>Changes in mood, behavior and personality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be suspicious, irritable, teary or silly • Anxiety and frustration become more evident, begins to have difficulty with emotional and impulse control and his or her effect on others | <p>The “late stage” of Alzheimer’s disease lasts approximately 1-3 years. People in this stage typically show the following characteristics and/or symptoms:</p> <p><u>Little or no short term memory remains</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have unpredictable moments when a memory surfaces or the person responds to something from the past • Person only in the present now <p><u>Inability to perform tasks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to bathe, dress, eat, and go to the bathroom without assistance • May be able to perform a small, very simple step of a task with assistance <p><u>Complete lack of judgment</u></p> <p><u>Unable to use words to communicate</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication becomes mostly non-verbal |

Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

Introduction Page V

| EARLY STAGE <i>(continued)</i> | MIDDLE STAGE <i>(continued)</i> | LATE STAGE <i>(continued)</i> |
|---|--|--|
| <p><u>Language changes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgetting names of common objects • Difficulty coming up with the right word to use—talks around things <p><u>Changes in mood, behavior, personality</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging in behaviors that are out of character—such as crying, swearing, angry outbursts, rudeness, or withdrawal from usual activities • Having a numb or flat emotional response to an event that would usually get a more connected response—such as a death in the family or a car accident • Wearing dirty clothes when usually immaculate in appearance <p><u>Disorientation to time and place</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not knowing consistently where he or she is • Becoming lost in familiar places • Not knowing the time of day, day of week, month, or year <p><u>Problems with abstract thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in ability to make patterns from data—interpreting what something means that he is seeing • Loss of initiative—unable to conceptualize how to start a task but can finish it once told/shown | <p><u>Changes in mood, behavior and personality</u> <i>(continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May imagine she hears or sees things that are really not there • May have increased restlessness, wandering, and/or noticeable decrease in functioning later in the day (known as “sundowning”) <p><u>Confused about time and place</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn’t know where she is • Loses all sense of time • May confuse day and night <p><u>Loses ability to think abstractly</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loses personality and/or sense of self—loses ability to understand • Unable to make patterns from data and reliably interpret the meaning of what he or she is seeing or hearing • Unable to hold onto two thoughts or ideas at the same time <p><u>Changes in the ability to perceive the environment through the senses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual changes in depth perception make prints and patterns confusing—patterns in a rug may appear as holes in floor, shadows may become frightening holes or seem strange and threatening, and it might seem as if the car she is riding in is continuously going to crash into things • Smell and taste are altered. Foods may taste different and/or appetite may be diminished because of taste and smell changes • Sense of touch is altered with regards to ability to interpret temperature - may no longer feel how hot a radiator, stove, or frying pan is • Hearing is altered. Sound discrimination becomes more difficult—everything may sound garbled. The ability to mask out background sounds in order to focus becomes increasingly difficult <p><u>Changes occur physically</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lose control of bladder and/or bowel function • May be less steady when walking, or develop an altered gait • May begin losing weight | <p><u>Unable to use words to communicate</u> <i>(continued)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May groan, scream or make grunting noises <p><u>May want to put everything into mouth, or touch, or grab for everything</u></p> <p><u>Cannot recognize family or self in mirror</u></p> <p><u>The ability to perceive the environment through the senses continues to decline</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May remain able to respond or react to certain sensory stimulation <p><u>Continues to decline physically</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have trouble chewing and/or swallowing • May lose ability to walk • Likely to be incontinent of urine and stool |